

CAMPAIGN

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SHUT DOWN US BASES!

Public awareness about US bases in Britain is growing and so is the opposition, writes CND General Secretary **Sophie Bolt**.

The United States currently has at least 19 military bases across Britain. In fact, the US has had a continuous military presence in Britain since the end of the Second World War, when the government signed an agreement with NATO allowing military forces to operate within the country.

Today, these bases are part of a huge global network of over 800 US bases, from which the US attempts to maintain its military dominance.

Successive British governments have argued that hosting these military bases is in Britain's national security. But, in reality they make the world far more dangerous, ensure Britain's complicity in war crimes, and put the entire

population on the nuclear front line.

The illegal war on Iran is just the latest act of aggression by US President Donald Trump's administration which has exposed the critical role that bases in Britain play in the US' military machine. In April, CND organised a powerful demonstration at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, calling for an end to the war and against Trump's use of this base.

What makes Fairford so central to US military operations is that it is the only base in Europe with a 3,000-metre-long runway. This enables heavy, long-range US bombers to take off and

land. Until the fragile ceasefire, huge B-1, B-2 and B-52 US bombers were carrying out twice-daily bombing missions from the base, dropping 2,000lb bombs on Iran.

Whilst Keir Starmer has tried to argue the base has only been used by the US to carry out 'defensive' military attacks, experts at Drone Wars suggest the British government does not have oversight of the deployment of bombers from the base. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that schools and hospitals have been targeted by bombers from this base – potential war crimes.

Hundreds of activists from across the country

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joined a march from Fairford town centre to the base's runway. Many local residents came out and held placards supporting the protest.

The demonstration has been a catalyst for a new organisation – Fairford Action – which aims to organise regular actions at the base and bring together people from the local area to make sure the campaign against this base keeps growing.

The US airbase RAF Lakenheath is also a very important site of protest for CND. Not only have US fighter jets been deployed from there to attack Iran, but there is also overwhelming evidence that deadly US nuclear weapons are stationed there. These B61-12 bombs have three times the destructive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 which killed over 200,000 people. Launched by F35A nuclear-capable fighter jets already at the base, they have been



designed to be used on the battlefield against troops and conventional weapons. Military experts argue they increase the risk of nuclear weapons being used.

Given Trump's widening military aggression and nuclear threats, the presence of US nuclear weapons only increases the risk that Britain will become a 'legitimate target' in a nuclear conflict. The British government refuses to confirm the presence of these nuclear weapons, saying it is a matter for the US administration. Yet in 2021, on the grounds of so-called national

security, the former Defence Secretary Ben Wallace issued an exemption certificate so that Lakenheath – along with all US bases in Britain – have no legal obligation to meet emergency radiation regulations. This shows again how people's safety is put at great risk in the interests of Britain's nuclear alliance with the US.

Protests at these US military bases are backed by public opinion. Over 60% don't want US nuclear weapons stationed in Britain. Nearly 50% oppose allowing Trump to use UK bases. The movement for an end to this toxic military alliance is growing and CND is at its heart.

We're working with MPs, trade unions and other campaigning organisations to call on the government to break the link with Trump and instead forge an independent foreign policy based on peace, diplomacy, and international law.





NUCLEAR HYPOCRISY AT THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP writes for CND following her participation in a major disarmament conference at the UN.

I recently returned from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations in New York, something of a make-or-break moment for global arms control. This conference has not reached a consensus on disarmament since 2010, reflecting a context of rising geopolitical tensions where nuclear-armed states are rushing to rearm.

Spending on nuclear weapons surged by a worrying 20% last year, driven overwhelmingly by the United States, which continues to pour more money into these destructive weapons than all other armed states combined. Britain is no exception to this trend either, with our nuclear arsenal spend

rising by 17% in 2025, as the government pushes ahead with Trident replacement, warhead upgrades and stockpile increases – even as it contemplates further cuts to fund higher defence spending.

The NPT, enacted in 1970, was designed to move us out of the state of permanent threat that characterised the Cold War. Article VI of the treaty obliges nuclear-armed signatory states to pursue disarmament. In return, non-armed state signatories legally commit never to acquire nuclear weapons.

But for the nuclear states, it has always been a case of do as we say, not as we do. The NPT effectively enshrines the idea that it is legitimate for

powerful nuclear states to possess constant strategic threat over non-nuclear neighbours, constantly raised over them like a giant fist.

That contradiction is precisely why the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has become so important. Entering into force in 2021, the TPNW is based on the principle that no state should possess weapons capable of annihilating humanity – unlike the NPT which effectively legitimises the possession of nuclear arsenals by a small group of states. It reflects the overwhelming global frustration towards the nuclear powers' failure to honour their disarmament commitments.



Britain and the other nuclear-armed states routinely dismiss the TPNW as unrealistic. Yet what is truly unrealistic is expecting non-nuclear states to indefinitely accept a system built on permanent nuclear inequality. The ban treaty demonstrates that there is an alternative vision emerging internationally: one which rejects the idea that security can be built on the premise of mass destruction. Even without the participation of nuclear powers so far, the TPNW is helping to stigmatise nuclear weapons politically and morally in much the same way earlier treaties shifted global attitudes towards landmines and cluster munitions.

What is clear is that nuclear states' current behaviour flies in the face of the NPT. Agreement at this conference ultimately foundered on the war against Iran. In an act of breathtaking hypocrisy, the US State Department claimed that Iran represents the 'greatest nuclear proliferation threat' facing the treaty system right

now. Their delegates insisted on an agreement document that explicitly named Iran and its noncompliance with the treaty. Predictably, Iran refused to accept this wording or anything aimed at restricting what it termed its 'peaceful nuclear programme'.

The tension between the US and Iran highlights a deeper issue: that nuclear powers get to write the rules governing nuclear weapons, exempting themselves from standards imposed on non-nuclear states. To coin a phrase, it is one rule for them and another for everyone else.

America lecturing Iran is just throwing stones in a glass house. It was not long before the conference that Trump threatened 'a whole civilization will die

tonight'. It is hard to think of anything less conducive to disarmament than the US and Israel's war against Iran.

The inability of nuclear states to reach agreement on how to move forward during such a profound moment of nuclear danger should worry us all. Yet, if there was a grim inevitability to this conference's failure, we must not meet this with grim resignation.

Now more than ever, we must keep sounding the alarm about the rising nuclear threat, exposing the imperialist hypocrisy which drives it, and building support for genuine multilateral disarmament through frameworks like the TPNW which refuse to accept nuclear weapons as a permanent fact.



TURBULENT POLITICAL TIMES CALL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

CND grassroots update.

CND groups across the country used May's local and devolved elections to highlight to candidates the importance of CND's campaigns. **London CND** promoted support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), **Scottish CND** organised hustings, and CND Cymru published a Welsh-focused Alternative Defence Review.

The results themselves showed the fundamental shifts and fragmentation taking place in British politics – resulting in significant losses for Keir

Starmer's government. It saw a serious increase in support for the far right, but also a strong surge for parties like Plaid Cymru and the Green Party, advocating peace and nuclear disarmament.

We know that the rise of the far right is a threat to us all – exploiting the worsening economic situation to whip up racism and hatred. Further price hikes are expected, yet the government continues to be pressured to cut spending on social services to fund even more hikes to the military

budget and nuclear weapons.

This is why CND is launching our **People not Nukes** campaign in the next few weeks. We'll have new resources and campaigning materials and want you, our groups and supporters, to organise local meetings to debate these topics in our communities. Let's get out there and win the argument, from Bedford to Bristol, Edinburgh to Exeter!

We also want to win the argument on campuses across the country and hope the relaunched **Youth and Student CND** network will help with that. Students across the country are active on anti-nuclear actions, such as the campaign against Sheffield University's involvement with the design of Britain's next nuclear warhead. We want to bring together





our work for the UK to step away from its toxic military relationship with the US. On July 4th, groups including **Yorkshire CND** and **Fairford Action** organised Independence from America protests at local US bases.

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace ran a fantastic peace camp against the US presence at Lakenheath, including the fact that American nuclear weapons are likely stored there.

So much is going on and we thank everyone involved. While we may live in worrying times, the possibility for a new direction is there. Let's make it happen.

existing and new campaigners across the country to support each other's work and provide some inspiration. Please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

There is much inspiring work going on across the country, including the Pembrokeshire campaign **PARC against DARC**. This was set up to oppose the Ministry

of Defence and the US military from building a Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC) installation at Cawdor Barracks in West Wales. The group have gained huge support in their local community and are now hoping the new Welsh government will stop this project in its tracks.

This would be a significant victory in

Spotlight on new CND member: **Fiona Sim**

"I joined CND to support the campaign against the government's nuclear expansion plans. Since joining, I attended CND's protest at RAF Marham. I am also an active member of Lewisham & Greenwich CND. Nuclear-armed states like the US

and Israel use nuclear weapons to hold the world to ransom. This has had deadly

consequences for Palestine, Iran, and the rest of West Asia, but also other countries in the global south – including in Africa and Latin America.

That's why I think the campaign for peace and nuclear disarmament goes hand in hand with the movement against colonialism."





WHY A GREEN ECONOMY IS BRITAIN'S STRONGEST DEFENCE

Green Party Councillor **Gary Champion** questions the assumption in government that more military spending is required.

The British political landscape is stuck in a dead-end debate. As the government pushes an accelerated defence spending target of 2.5% of GDP – with an eye on a 3.5% NATO benchmark by 2035 – we are told national security must come at the expense of domestic relief.

Yet, while Westminster pours billions of pounds into rigid hardware to satisfy global markets, the people who actually serve are routinely overlooked. 120 years after Britain launched HMS Dreadnought and ignited a ruinous naval arms race, the name remains the same, and so does the folly.

Recent data reveals Britain has overtaken Russia to become the third-largest nuclear weapons spender on

Earth, pouring £9.6 billion into its arsenal in 2025 alone. Driven by the new Dreadnought-class submarines and the Project Astraea warhead, this financial black hole will swallow 25% of the total Ministry of Defence budget. Yet, just as original Edwardian battleships were rendered ineffective by cheap undersea mines, today's multi-billion-pound platforms are intensely vulnerable to modern, asymmetric drone technology.

Meanwhile, the frontline reality for our forces is a scandal of private outsourcing and systemic neglect. Families in major UK garrisons endure toxic black mould, collapsing ceilings, and freezing winters. This neglect continues post-service, where massive gaps in veterans' mental

health care drive a pipeline into institutional homelessness.

A Green perspective offers a genuine alternative, demanding a total shift in how we define safety. Resources should be unlocked by scrapping Trident, implementing a progressive wealth tax on fortunes over £10 million, and reversing the cuts that dropped foreign aid to a historic low of 0.3% of GNI – a policy currently affecting UN food programmes for 25 million people facing famine in Sudan.

Worse still, while aid is hollowed out, the UK has committed £662 million to further militarise the French coastline as part of its immigration policy. It is a glaring contradiction: the government actively defunds the human



security that keeps people safe in their homelands, only to spend billions on high-tech border deterrence to repel them when climate chaos and conflict force them to flee.

Our current crisis demands the radical domestic ambition of the 1945 post-war reconstruction. When Britain chose to 'win the peace' from the ashes of a bankrupt economy, it did not surrender to scarcity; it boldly established the NHS and set out to destroy William Beveridge's 'giant evils'

of want, squalor, and disease.

We need to channel that same transformative state-building spirit today on our own frontlines. Local councils must be empowered to lead a climate-era reconstruction by investing in a local 'Greener Homes Guarantee' – a proposed massive insulation and retrofitting programme. This could permanently slash household energy bills for the poorest families while driving

down emissions.

True national defence doesn't look like a nuclear submarine; it looks like insulated homes, secure food supplies, mental health safety nets, and a robust social fabric. We cannot protect our future abroad if we continue to neglect the human security of our communities at home.



BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR SUBS DELAY

Dave Cullen, Policy Fellow at BASIC, explains the current situation with Britain's nuclear submarines.

The resignations of multiple Ministry of Defence ministers in the past few weeks have once again shone a light on the department's deep financial dysfunction. Despite a change of

government in 2024, and billions of pounds in annual funding increases over recent years, the department appears to be chronically incapable of reining in its military spending ambitions

to match the available budget. The UK's nuclear programme remains the largest driver of rising costs.

It is nearly four years since the MoD last



published an official estimate for future military equipment spending, but the most recent figures revealed a £16bn funding hole over the next 10 years.

The missing equipment plans fit into a wider picture of increasing government secrecy around the nuclear programme. Last year every significant piece of project data on the Dreadnought programme (Britain's new submarines for carrying its nuclear-armed missiles) was redacted, including estimated lifetime costs, information on the schedule, and the previous year's spending. The MoD continues to insist that the first submarine, HMS Dreadnought, will be in service in the 'early 2030s' and that the programme will

cost less than £41bn (£10bn of which was originally supposed to be 'contingency'). However, these assurances look increasingly less credible in light of the refusal to provide basic project information, particularly as the timeline to produce the reactor core for HMS Dreadnought is currently assessed to be 'unachievable'.

In March the MoD held a 'keel-laying' ceremony for HMS Dreadnought. The timing of these ceremonies is somewhat arbitrary, but there were 11 years between the keel-laying ceremony for Astute-class submarine HMS Anson and its commissioning. If the same interval were repeated, HMS Dreadnought will not be commissioned until 2037, and might not enter service until 2039 or later.

Delays to the Dreadnought programme will have severe consequences for the current Vanguard fleet, which is already seriously struggling. Six-month patrols are now the norm, piling pressure on crew members and the ageing submarines. When the Dreadnoughts finally emerge, the MoD can only hope they do not suffer from the reliability problems plaguing the Astute-class. These attack submarines are so new that the last one is still in production, but there have been months when none were seaworthy, and since last July, only one of the six is operational. If similar problems arise in the Dreadnought fleet, it is hard to believe that the UK will be able to maintain its posture of permanently keeping a nuclear-armed submarine at sea.

Photo: @Ministry of Defence





“EACH ARTEFACT CARRIES ITS OWN POWERFUL MESSAGE”

CND Campaigns Director **Sara Medi Jones** interviews a representative of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum on the role of museums in remembering historic moments.

Few institutions understand the responsibility of preserving the stories of the past more acutely than the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Established in 1955, the museum was founded “to convey to the world the actual facts of the atomic bombing and to contribute to the abolition of nuclear weapons,” as a representative explains.

Decades after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, that mission is more urgent than ever.

While the museum’s purpose has remained constant, the way it communicates that message continues to evolve. In recent years, extensive renovations have sought to make



Photo: @Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum with thanks to Nobuo Tetsutani

the reality of the atomic bombing more accessible to visitors while addressing a pressing challenge: how to preserve and pass on the experiences of survivors as they grow older.

The museum holds approximately 22,000 artefacts and materials. “The museum’s greatest strength lies in its collection,” the representative explains, “which allows us to convey the reality of the

devastation caused by the atomic bombing to people from all over the world.”

These artefacts form the heart of the visitor experience. Rather than presenting history as a series of dates and facts, the museum seeks to communicate the human reality of what happened on 6 August 1945. “The materials vividly illustrate the grief and suffering experienced by the victims and their families, leaving a profound impression on visitors,” the representative says.

CND asks which artefacts are the most powerful, yet the museum is reluctant to single any out.

“Each artefact that conveys the reality of the atomic bombing



embodies the donors' and their families' hopes for peace," the representative explains. "Each artefact carries its own powerful message."

For those who curate the exhibitions, the work is not simply about preserving the past. It is also about addressing the present.

As the representative explains: "The scenes that visitors witness at the museum are not merely part of a distant

past; if nuclear weapons were ever used again, similar tragedies would inevitably be repeated."

That conviction underlines the wider importance of museums in preserving difficult histories.

"We believe it is essential to continue preserving and conveying the experiences, thoughts, and lives of the people of August 6 to those living today," the representative says, "so that visitors

can recognise these events not as something that happened in a far-removed world, but as an issue that concerns them personally and directly."

With sadly fewer survivors able to share their stories as the years go on, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum demonstrates the role of museums in the urgent task of ensuring that future generations learn the lessons of history so they can build a better future.

CND CONFERENCE 2026: SAVE THE DATE

Join us on **Sunday 4 October 2026** to have your say at CND's AGM and Policy Conference.

Monday 27 July: deadline for nominations for directly elected members of CND Council and officers; deadline for ordinary resolutions.

Tuesday 1 September: Deadline for amendments and special (constitutional) resolutions.

For any queries please contact conference@cnduk.org

SHUT DOWN US BASES: IN-PERSON GATHERING

Join us on **Saturday 24 October** for a day of debate and action, hosted by Yorkshire CND and Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign.

We will gather at Harrogate Friends Meeting House for a discussion on RAF Menwith Hill's role in US Missile Defence, followed by travel to RAF Menwith for a protest. All welcome!

For any queries please contact information@cnduk.org



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